

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of managing television network bandwidth comprising:

broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;

identifying each channel of said plurality of channels that is tuned by at least one receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;

determining if one channel of said plurality of channels is not tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers; and

if one channel of said plurality of channels is not tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers, broadcasting information other than a program on said one channel.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing reception of any channel.

5. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:

broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;

defining a group of channels comprising a subset of said plurality of channels;

5 identifying each channel of said group of channels that is tuned by at least one
 receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;
 determining if one channel of said group of channels is not tuned by any one of
 said plurality of receivers; and
 if one channel of said group of channels is not tuned by any one of said plurality
 10 of receivers, broadcasting information other than a program on said one channel.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:
 receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal
 indicating the channel tuned.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:
 receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal
 indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

8. The method of claim 5 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:
 receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal
 indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing
 reception of any channel.

9. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:
 broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of
 receivers across said network;
 identifying each channel of said plurality of channels that is tuned by at least one
 5 receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;
 determining if one channel of said plurality of channels tuned is a channel that has
 been reallocated as a data service channel; and
 if one channel of said plurality of channels tuned by any one of said plurality of
 receivers is a channel that has been reallocated as a data service channel, reestablishing
 10 broadcast of a program on said one channel.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

12. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing reception of any channel.

13. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:

broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;

defining a group of channels comprising a subset of said plurality of channels;

identifying each channel of said group of channels that is tuned by at least one receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;

determining if one channel of said group of channels tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers is a channel that has been reallocated as a data service channel; and

if one channel of said group of channels tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers is a channel that has been reallocated as a data service channel, reestablishing broadcast of a program on said one channel.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing reception of any channel.

17. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:

broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;

identifying each channel of said plurality of channels that is tuned by at least one receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;

determining if one channel of said plurality of channels is not tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers; and

if one channel of said plurality of channels is not tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers, broadcasting a program on said one channel at a reduced data rate.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

20. The method of claim 17 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing reception of any channel.

21. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:

broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;

defining a group of channels comprising a subset of said plurality of channels;

5 identifying each channel of said group of channels that is tuned by at least one receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;

determining if one channel of said group of channels is not tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers; and

10 if one channel of said group of channels is not tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers, broadcasting a program on said one channel at a reduced data rate.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned.

23. The method of claim 21 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

24. The method of claim 21 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing reception of any channel.

25. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:

broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;

5 identifying each channel of said plurality of channels that is tuned by at least one receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;

determining if one channel of said plurality of channels tuned is a channel that has been configured to operate at a reduced data rate; and

if one channel of said plurality of channels tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers is a channel that has been configured to operate at a reduced data rate,
 10 configuring said one channel to operate at a higher data rate.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:
 receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned.

27. The method of claim 25 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:
 receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

28. The method of claim 25 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:
 receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing reception of any channel.

5 29. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:
 broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;
 defining a group of channels comprising a subset of said plurality of channels;
 5 identifying each channel of said group of channels that is tuned by at least one receiver of said plurality of receivers connected to said network;
 determining if one channel of said group of channels tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers is a channel that has been configured to operate at a reduced data rate; and

10 if one channel of said group of channels tuned by any one of said plurality of receivers is a channel that has been configured to operate at a reduced data rate,
 configuring said one channel to operate at a higher data rate.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned.

31. The method of claim 29 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned and the previous channel tuned.

32. The method of claim 29 wherein said step of identifying further comprises:

receiving a signal from each receiver of said plurality of receivers, said signal indicating the channel tuned if a user has selected a receiver function discontinuing reception of any channel.

33. A method for managing network bandwidth comprising:

broadcasting a plurality of programs on a plurality of channels to a plurality of receivers across said network;

configuring at least one channel of said plurality of channels to operate at a reduced data rate;

determining if a message comprising a commercial message or public service announcement is contained in said one channel; and

if said one channel contains said message, configuring said one channel to operate at a higher data rate.

34. A programmable television receiving unit coupled to network comprising:

a remote user input device;

a program operable to receive a signal from said user input device and to transmit an upstream message if said signal enables said receiving unit to transition from a quiescent state to an operational state.

35. The program of claim 34 wherein said message comprises a channel number.

36. The program of claim 35 wherein said message comprises a receiving unit identifier.

37. The program of claim 34 further comprising:

a routine operable to transmit a message if said signal selects a channel.

38. The program of claim 37 wherein said message comprises a receiving unit identifier.

39. The program of claim 37 further comprising

a routine operable to transmit a message indicating a previous channel if said signal selects a new channel.

40. The program of claim 39 further comprising:

a routine operable to transmit a message if said signal enables said receiving unit to transition from an operational state to a quiescent state.